

The Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project: Providing Culturally Sustainable Online Interpretive Content to the Public (South Australia)

IPinCH Case Study – Final Report



by Amy Roberts, Isobelle Campbell,
and the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc.

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This research was made possible, in part, through the support of the Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage (IPinCH) project, a Major Collaborative Research Initiative funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. IPinCH explores the rights, values, and responsibilities associated with material culture, cultural knowledge and the practice of heritage research.

www.sfu.ca/ipinch

Front cover: The cliffs at Ngaut Ngaut. Photograph by Amy Roberts.

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*“Ngaut Ngaut is part of my heritage and culture. We have to preserve it for future generations.
My life would be empty without my connection to this place.”*

Isobelle Campbell

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Special thanks go to the Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage (IPinCH) research group, which is supported by Simon Fraser University (British Columbia, Canada) and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. In particular, we are most grateful to George Nicholas for his support and guidance and to the IPinCH steering committee for peer reviewing our work.

Previous funding for an earlier stage of the Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project was also gratefully received from the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division of the Government of South Australia's Department of Premier and Cabinet.

Thank you to staff and students affiliated with the Flinders University Archaeology Department. In particular, we acknowledge the prior assistance of Lyn Leader-Elliott and Alex van Wessem.

Thanks also to staff at the Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources for supporting this project.

We also acknowledge the South Australian Museum for providing copies of relevant materials for this project free of charge. Special thanks are due to Lea Gardam and Ali Abdullah-Highfold from the archives section for their assistance. We also thank the South Australian Museum for providing access to the archaeological collections.

A Few Words on Words

Whilst many non-Aboriginal people know of Ngaut Ngaut by its English name, Devon Downs, the Aboriginal community have and always will refer to this place by its traditional name. Even though community members have continued to use traditional names for places on their country, they also wish to see these names reinstated in the broader literature. We should not forget that the naming of places is always power-laden in character (Berg and Kearns 2009) and that naming has played a key role in the “colonial silencing of [I]ndigenous cultures” (Vuolteenaho and Berg 2009: 1). Indeed, in the case of Ngaut Ngaut both the traditional and colonial names were originally published in the works of Norman Tindale (e.g., Tindale 1974); however, it has only been the colonial toponym that has been privileged in textbooks (e.g., Colley 2002; Flood 1990; Frankel 1991; Hiscock 2008; Holdaway and Stern 2004; Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999).

Given these issues, in this report we consciously choose to privilege traditional place names (after Roberts and MACAI 2012). This step is seen as just one way that Indigenous peoples can counter colonialism (see Roberts and Campbell 2012).

Foreword

Ngaut Ngaut is one of Australia's very special places. The Aboriginal people of the Mid Murray, Riverland and Mallee value Ngaut Ngaut as a place of great cultural significance. It is a place intimately tied to our Dreaming, a place where the "old people" lived and a place that preserves the environment. It is also a place that demonstrates our ongoing connection to our country and provides us with a sense of belonging. Our community values Ngaut Ngaut as a place where we can teach our children about their culture.



We also acknowledge that Ngaut Ngaut tells stories about the development of archaeology in Australia and the role that this site plays in educating non-Indigenous Australia and the world about the deep and dynamic past of all Indigenous Australians.

My father, the late Richard Hunter, former chairperson of the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc., developed Ngaut Ngaut as a cultural tourism site. His hope was that the tours conducted by community members would help Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people gain a better understanding of each other. He is greatly missed by his family and the broader community.

The work we have undertaken as part of our case study with IPinCH, and all related projects, was conducted to further my father's aim to promote cross-cultural understanding through education, and all interpretive products have been designed to complement the cultural tours conducted by the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc. In particular we wish to expand the general public's knowledge about Ngaut Ngaut to include the cultural aspects of the site that we value, in addition to the more widely known archaeological history. We feel that it is important the public understands the diversity and complexity of our culture, and it is for this reason that we share stories relating to group boundaries, Dreamings, oral histories, totems and rock art, just to name a few. These stories tie us to the land and river and all that they provide.



Isobelle Campbell – October 2014

Chairperson of the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc.

INTRODUCTION

Many Indigenous groups around the world are struggling to come to terms with the issues an online environment poses to the presentation of the Indigenous past and cultural present. This IPinCH case study aimed to address the issue of a lack of culturally sustainable¹ interpretive content online through a community-based approach to the production of interpretive materials. As such, the content produced by our project incorporated approved expressions of community perceptions of tangible and intangible aspects and values of a significant cultural landscape. This case study, which was jointly undertaken by the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc. (MACAI) and Dr. Amy Roberts, focused on the interpretation of the Ngaut Ngaut heritage complex in South Australia.

BACKGROUND

Ngaut Ngaut is located on the River Murray in South Australia. Non-Indigenous people primarily know of this place because it is recognised as the first stratified rockshelter deposit to be scientifically excavated in Australia (see Hemming et al. 1989: 6; Holdaway and Stern 2004: 287; Horton 1991: 153; Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999:11; Smith 1982: 109). This archaeological work was conducted by Herbert Hale and Norman Tindale in 1929 (Hemming et al. 1989).



Location of Ngaut Ngaut.

¹ The term “culturally sustainable” is used in this report to refer to the production of materials that are deemed by the community to do no harm and which at the same time allow the community to share and impart useful and essential information to the public and other community members.

It was at this site that Hale and Tindale demonstrated the potential of careful, layer-by-layer excavations (in an Australian context), using equipment still employed by archaeologists today such as trowels, brushes and sieves (Hale and Tindale 1930: 175). Prior to their pioneering work, little systematic research had been conducted in relation to the archaeology of Indigenous Australians. In fact, the thinking of the day was that Indigenous Australians were recent arrivals to Australia and that their material culture had not changed over time (Mulvaney and Kamminga 1999: 12). Hence, the research at Ngaut Ngaut provided a turning point in the way the Indigenous Australian archaeological record and Indigenous history was viewed by non-Indigenous people, by revealing that Aboriginal people had occupied the continent for millennia (after Roberts and MACAI 2012).



Ngaut Ngaut in 1929 before the main excavation began. Norman Tindale is photographing the site. Photograph by Harold Sheard. Image courtesy of the South Australian Museum Archives, AA290/3/1/24, Sheard Collection.

Ngaut Ngaut, however, has a much deeper level of significance for the Aboriginal community, including a range of other aspects of significance such as: rock art interpretations and cultural meanings, “Dreamings”², oral histories, discussions about Aboriginal group boundaries, “totemic”³ issues, and “bushtucker”⁴ knowledge (see Roberts and Campbell 2012; Roberts and MACAI 2012; Roberts et al. 2010). Acknowledging, researching and recording a wider range of values has been a central component of this case study (as well as earlier stages of the larger project), as further discussed below. Whilst all of the topics represented in the interpretive materials produced from this project are not included in this report, we have included and foregrounded a number of the important cultural beliefs and narratives that are intimately tied with the Ngaut Ngaut heritage complex.

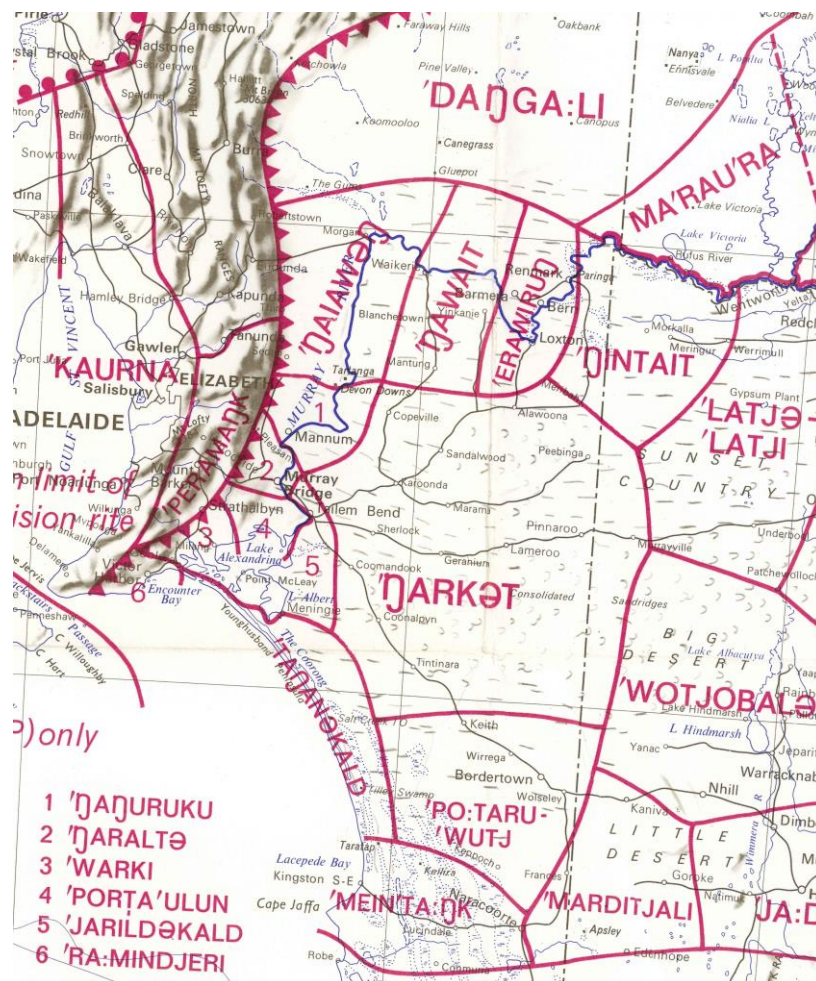
² The term “Dreaming” (sometimes also referred to as the “Dreamtime”) has been variously described and may have “different meanings for different Aboriginal people” (Australian Museum 2009). However, for the purposes of this report we use this term to refer to the “complex network of knowledge, faith and practices that derive from stories of creation” and that may dominate “all spiritual and physical aspects of Aboriginal life” including “the structures of society, the rules for social behaviour and the ceremonies performed in order to maintain the life of the land” (Australian Museum 2009).

³ In Aboriginal Australia, the term “totem” is generally used to refer to something that is considered a symbol of a person or a group and can also have the meaning of friend and protector.

⁴ “Bushtucker” is an Australian term primarily used to refer to Indigenous Australian plant and animal foods.

Nganguraku, Ngaiawang and Ngarkat Country

The stories relating to Ngaut Ngaut involve a number of Aboriginal groups including the Nganguraku ('Nganguruku), Ngaiawang ('Ngaiawəŋg) and Ngarkat ('Ngarkət) peoples. There are varying accounts of Aboriginal groups, group boundaries and group names in the ethno-historical records for this region. However, one of the most well-known accounts about these issues was provided by Norman Tindale in 1974.⁵ A portion of his map documenting "tribal boundaries" for this region is reproduced below:



A section of Tindale's 1974 "Tribal Boundaries in Aboriginal Australia" map.
Copyright Tony Tindale and Beryl George and courtesy of the South Australian Museum Archives,
AA338/19/44.

Tindale located the site of Ngaut Ngaut (Devon Downs) on the boundary between the Nganguraku and Ngaiawang groups. Contemporary Aboriginal community members often say that Ngaut Ngaut is in Nganguraku country.

⁵ Norman Tindale began working for the South Australian Museum in 1918 (South Australian Museum 2011). During his career he worked in the fields of entomology, archaeology and anthropology. He remained an Honorary Associate of the Museum until his death, an association that spanned more than seven decades (Jones 1995). Tindale spent many years recording archaeological sites and interviewing Aboriginal people along the River Murray.

Ngaut Ngaut – An Ancestral Being⁶

Ngaut Ngaut is an ancestral being. Beliefs and Dreaming stories about Ngaut Ngaut are complex and at times Ngaut Ngaut is described as either a man or a woman. People in the Aboriginal community today may also refer to Ngaut Ngaut as a demon or a fire demon.



Ngaut Ngaut the fire demon. Artwork by Lynne Rigney.

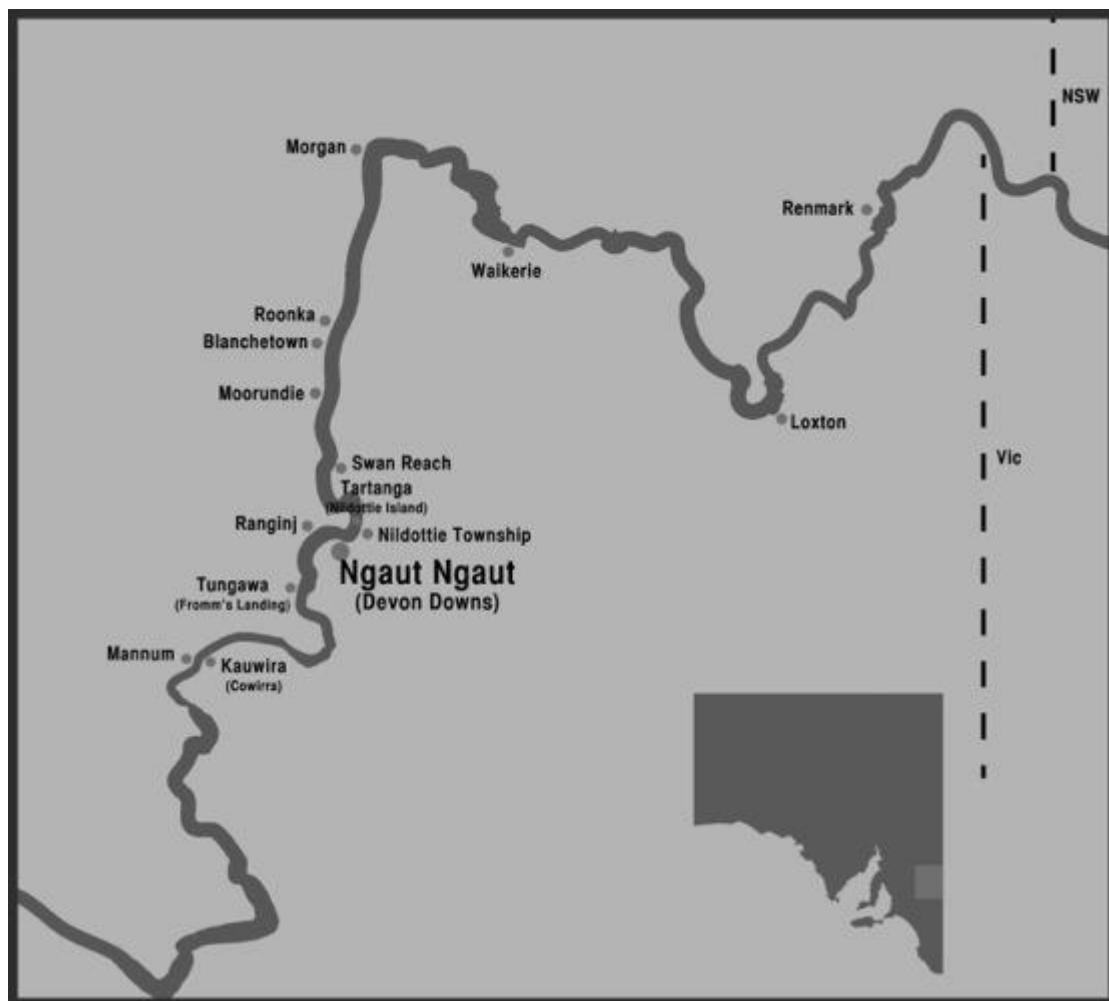
One Dreaming story about Ngaut Ngaut tells of a half-overgrown or giant-like man who lived at a place called Witjawitj. This is a rockhole where Aboriginal people would collect water as they travelled between Nildottie and Loxton (to trade and attend ceremonies). Records indicate that this water source at Witjawitj provided fresh water until the government or farmers put down a bore and “broke” it by making the water salty. The country where Ngaut Ngaut lived may either be referred to as Ngaut Ngaut or as Witjawitj country.

⁶ See the following references for this introductory section: Ellis 1964; Hemming and Cook n.d.: 62; Tindale c.1924–c.1991; Tindale 1930–1952: 303-304, 309; Tindale c.1930–c.1991; Tindale c.1931–c.1991a; Tindale c.1931–c.1991b: 20; Tindale 1952–1954: 6; Tindale 1953:1, 3, 7, 23; Tindale 1964a; Tindale 1964b; Tindale c.1968–1986; Tindale 1974: 65, 119, 134, 215; Tindale and Pretty 1978. Aspects of this section, not otherwise available in the ethno-historical record, were also contributed by contemporary community members during consultation sessions to produce the interpretive materials.

Witjawitj is also an ancestral being. He is believed to be powerful and is feared. The term “Witjawitj” may also literally refer to the “small people” or “small beings” who live in Ngarkat country (located east of Ngaut Ngaut).

Another Dreaming story about Ngaut Ngaut talks of a one-legged woman who steals children if they wander out into the bush alone. Dreaming stories like this are still told to children to keep them safe, but they also hold much deeper meaning.

There are also other stories about Ngaut Ngaut. Some of these originate in places such as western Victoria (Vic).



Location of Ngaut Ngaut and other places of importance along the River Murray as noted in the text. Map adapted from Roberts and MACAI (2012).

The Ngarkat People⁷

The country of the Ngarkat people lies to the east of Ngaut Ngaut out in the dry mallee.⁸ During times of drought or when the mallee root waters failed, the Ngarkat people would access Ngaut Ngaut and other places along recognised tracks in order to obtain water. An example of such a track is the steep path down the face of the cliff at the Ngaut Ngaut site. These tracks were used so that the game coming to drink at the water's edge on the gentler slopes were not disturbed.

The Ngarkat people would indicate their approach to people in the vicinity of Ngaut Ngaut by making smoke signals. After they collected water they would take it back to their camps in the scrub. They would often stay by the river to take refuge from the heat during the day and return to their camps to the east at night. During their visits local groups usually camped at the place known as Ranginj across the river or on Tartanga (Nildottie Island). The visits would involve ceremonies and the recalling of past events and intermarriages. Today the Ngarkat, Nganguraku, Ngaiawang, and other river groups are closely related as a result of such intermarriages.

The Ngarkat people would also trade with other Aboriginal groups along the Murray River. In particular, they were known for the stone axes they would exchange.



Ngarkat people camping. Artwork by Lynne Rigney.

⁷ See the following references for this section: Tindale c. 1930–c. 1991: 46, 47, 54-55; Tindale 1930-1952: 308; Tindale 1952-1954: 9; Tindale 1953:3, 5; Tindale 1965: 65; Tindale 1974: 65, 134.

⁸ *Mallee* is a term that can refer to a type of bushland or scrub that is dominated by mallee plants (a type of Australian eucalyptus), and common in some arid parts of Australia.

Ngurunderi – An Ancestral Creator⁹

Ngurunderi is one of the great ancestral creators for Aboriginal people of the Murray River and lower lakes. There are many accounts of the Ngurunderi Dreaming. Some versions present different perspectives of Ngurunderi while others reveal the detailed knowledge of local accounts. The following version focuses on the stretch of the river near Ngaut Ngaut.

Ngurunderi, the great ancestral creator, pursued Ponde, a giant Murray cod, down the river from the interior of what is now New South Wales. When he reached this section of the river he came to Kauwira (Cowirra). Ponde, in efforts to escape from Ngurunderi, cut new reaches into the river, sometimes weaving from side to side as he cut the deep water channel.

At Kauwira, the giant Murray cod changed direction and left the country of the Nganguraku people at the great bend in the river, still known as Ponde to both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

The Ngurunderi Dreaming continues beyond Nganguraku country towards the lower lakes.



Ngurunderi and Ponde. Artwork by Lynne Rigney.

⁹ See the following references for this section: Bell 1998; Clarke 1995; Hemming et al. 1989; ⁹ Tindale c.1924-c.1991: 40-41; Tindale and Pretty 1978:5.

The Black Duck Totem

The broader region around Ngaut Ngaut is also known as the place of the black duck totem (Pacific black duck, *Anas superciliosa*). There are also other known totems for this region. In particular, the black duck is strongly linked to the swamps in the Mannum area (see previous map).

Aboriginal people in this region may also use the Ngarrindjeri word *ngatji* to describe their totem or simply refer to it as their “bird.” A recorded Nganguraku word for totem is *tinda*.¹⁰



The Black Duck totem. Artwork by Lynne Rigney.

¹⁰ See the following references for this section: Tindale c.1924-c.1991: 49; Tindale c.1931-c.1991a: 63; Tindale c.1931-c.1991b: 23-24; Tindale 1953: 6-7, 23, 37,39.

Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park

Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park is currently co-managed by the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc. (MACAI) and the State of South Australia (under the *National Parks and Wildlife Act 1972* – see Department for Environment and Heritage 2008).¹¹ The late Richard Hunter, former chairperson of MACAI, was instrumental in negotiating the co-management agreement (see Roberts et al. 2010). He started cultural tours at Ngaut Ngaut in the late 1980s. Under Richard's leadership, MACAI constructed fences, boardwalks, and other infrastructure to facilitate safe visitor/tourist access (and also to prevent further damage to the area).



**The late Richard Hunter, father of Isobelle Campbell, former chairperson of the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc. and developer of Ngaut Ngaut as a cultural tourism site.
Image courtesy of Adam Bruzzone Photography.**

Indeed, as a result of MACAI's efforts the park has become a popular tourist destination (Department for Environment and Heritage 2008), with cultural tours of the site conducted by MACAI members. Cultural tours are conducted regularly for school groups and tourists who arrive on cruise boats such as *PS Murray Princess*, an inland paddlewheeler.

This tourism venture, like others operated by Indigenous groups around the world (see Mortensen and Nicholas 2010), has become an opportunity for economic development for the community.

¹¹ Co-management for Ngaut Ngaut was agreed upon in 2005: whilst the "ultimate control and management of the park remains the responsibility of the Director of National Parks and Wildlife, the co-management agreement provides for the nominees of MACAI to advise the Director on the management of the park and to continue to act as custodians of Aboriginal heritage" (see Department for Environment and Heritage 2008). In particular, a co-management Committee has been established whose role is to advise the Director on issues such as the management of cultural issues and sites on the park (see Department for Environment and Heritage 2008).



**MACAI cultural tour guide, Sam Stewart, explaining the significance of Ngaut Ngaut.
Photograph by Amy Roberts.**

IPINCH PROJECT IMPETUS

Exploring Tangible and Intangible Heritage

Our IPinCH case study was the second stage of a larger goal to produce interpretive materials for the Ngaut Ngaut heritage complex. The impetus for the first stage of the project began in early 2010 when parts of the Ngaut Ngaut Conservation Park (including boardwalk access to the rock engravings and excavation areas at the site) were closed by the Director of National Parks and Wildlife after riverbank erosion created what was considered a risk for tourists visiting the site (Department of Environment and Natural Resources 2010). This closure caused considerable impacts to MACAI's cultural tourism operations, as they were subsequently unable to take tourists to important areas of the cultural tour trail. This event led MACAI to consider the benefits of the creation of interpretive materials (for both off and on-site purposes) about Ngaut Ngaut that could be used when such closures occurred.



**An engraved “sun” motif on the rockshelter at Ngaut Ngaut.
Photograph by Alex van Wessem.**

Stage 1 of Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project (undertaken as a collaborative project by Amy Roberts and MACAI) was initially designed to present to the public the many tangible and intangible aspects and values of this significant place through a variety of media. It was important for MACAI that both tangible and intangible issues relating to the site were addressed in the interpretive content. Indeed, whilst MACAI members value the site's archaeological history and the physical evidence of the excavations, they also wanted the site's cultural importance to be presented to the public. As Byrne (2008: 151) has noted “[h]eritage practitioners have been prone to the “substantialisation” of culture” with the focus being on the “physical fabric/substance, whether in the form of artefacts or built structures”—so much so that it can often resemble “a kind of fetishism.” As such, it is now important for Indigenous peoples to be able to be able to “reconcile their holistic experience of ‘country’...” (Byrne 2008: 157).

It is thus imperative that researchers also always properly examine the intangible cultural heritage relating to sites and cultural landscapes—and moreover that they understand that “tangible and intangible heritage are two sides of the same coin” (Goncalves and Deacon 2003). Furthermore, it is important that any such examination takes place by heritage practitioners with the skills and experiences that enable them to undertake this work (see Roberts 2011).

The themes (relating to both tangible and intangible culture) addressed by the Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project (including those used in the IPinCH case study) were developed jointly by members of MACAI and Amy Roberts during collaborative workshops and site visits to Ngaut Ngaut, which began in 2010 (for Stage 1) and through to 2012 (for Stage 2). During these consultations and subsequent communications all images and text were thoroughly vetted and approved.



**Isabelle Campbell and Anita Hunter during one of the site visits in 2012.
Photograph by Amy Roberts.**

This collaborative approach to all outputs produced (e.g., interpretive materials, published articles and conference presentations) has continued throughout the project.



**Amy Roberts and Isobelle Campbell during one of the site visits in 2012.
Photograph by Ivy Campbell.**

Stage 1 research was funded by the Aboriginal Affairs and Reconciliation Division (South Australian Government). This funding allowed for the development of on-site signage, off-site interpretive posters and brochures to assist MACAI in their cultural tourism work.



Isobelle Campbell in front of one of the on-site interpretive signs developed in Stage 1 of the Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project (2011). Photograph by Amy Roberts.

The funding obtained for Stage 1 also allowed for the employment of Lynne Rigney, a MACAI artist, to provide paintings used to enhance the cultural narratives and beliefs explored in the interpretive materials (also used in this report and stage two products). Similarly, MACAI staff members were engaged to produce the sign frames rather than contracting the work out to a non-Indigenous company. Indeed, throughout the various Ngaut Ngaut projects, we worked to create additional community benefits as outlined below.

Addressing Internet Misinformation

Throughout stage one of the project, as we began conducting research, it became apparent that some of the information and other content available on the internet relating to Ngaut Ngaut was problematic. The most concerning issue was some offensive material that had been uploaded to the web by tourists. For example, some tourists had uploaded photographs they had taken on the cultural tours and captioned them with racist terminology. Other tourists had uploaded photographs of Ngaut Ngaut and were overtly and seemingly unnecessarily claiming copyright.¹² Whilst the MACAI protocol for tourists was to allow tourist photography, such unintended outcomes were not anticipated. Indeed, MACAI members were shocked to learn of the racist postings, which were sadly counter to their mission to promote cross-cultural understanding. To date, MACAI members have not yet banned tourist photography as they wish to continue with their undertaking to help Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people gain a better understanding of each other in a manner that is open and sharing – the online booklets produced through this project are seen as a serious contribution to this aim and as a counter to offensive online materials.¹³

Additional issues relating to the internet included abbreviated, unfocused, and/or inaccurate information about Ngaut Ngaut posted on State government and/or tourism websites. For example, tourism websites often only highlight one or two values relating to the site,¹⁴ and this information tends to simply be replicated on other websites.¹⁵ State government websites primarily discuss risk site management issues or, where detail is included (e.g., in management plans), some of this information is inaccurate (e.g., incorrect dates have been reported for the site) and, again, only certain aspects of the site may be emphasised (e.g., see Department for Environment and Heritage 2008). Whilst MACAI members may have been consulted about some of the content reported, the abbreviated and/or unfocused nature of the information reveals that the attempts lacked in-depth engagement with MACAI and detailed background research. These examples further highlight the importance of collaborative research projects that allow for meaningful knowledge sharing and more holistic, less partial understandings and interpretations.

¹² Links to these sites are not reported here to avoid the direction of traffic to such problematic web pages.

¹³ They were, however, interested to learn of the photographic protocols employed by other Indigenous communities around the world (e.g., as discussed by members of the Moriori IPinCH case study team at the 2011 IPinCH workshop in Vancouver).

¹⁴ See, for example, <http://www.southaustralia.com/info.aspx?id=9004072>.

¹⁵ See, for example, <http://www.agfg.com.au/guide/35297/sa/murraylands/murraylands/nildottie/attractions-tourism/ngaut-ngaut-aboriginal-site>.

IPINCH CASE STUDY GOALS (Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project: Stage 2)

As a result of problems arising relating to the online information about or related to Ngaut Ngaut, and through discussions with George Nicholas and the IPinCH group, the second stage of the project was devised in the latter half of 2010. The initial aim for this second stage was to allow additional research and community work to take place and to create a “culturally sustainable” online presence for MACAI, as well as build in other community benefits.

The goals created for the IPinCH case study included:

1. The development of an online interpretive booklet, collaboratively-produced (by Amy Roberts and MACAI) and community-approved. This booklet would be published jointly by MACAI and IPinCH and hosted on the South Australian Department of Environment, Water and Natural Resources’ website;
2. The production of 500 hard copy versions of the above booklet, with all proceeds from the sales going to MACAI to further community aspirations;
3. Undertaking additional research to go towards developing the content of the booklet – including:
 - a. Field work to conduct community consultation, take additional site photographs and collect additional site information;
 - b. Archival research;
 - c. Visits to the South Australian Museum in Adelaide with MACAI members to enable them to connect with both the collection excavated by Hale and Tindale, and relevant archival records; and to take photographs of this process and include them in the interpretive materials as a way to share the experience with other community members and the broader public;
 - d. Undertaking (semi-structured) on-site interviews with community members to seek their views and include these in the interpretive materials in relation to:
 - i. Their experience of visiting the Museum collections and thoughts as to any IP issues relating to such materials; and
 - ii. The importance of Ngaut Ngaut both at the community and individual level.
4. The ability for MACAI members to be involved in a range of capacity building initiatives, including attendance at national and international conferences and purchase of community reference materials.

The above final list of case study goals was refined in consultation with the IPinCH steering committee – with their comments and suggestions leading to a more robust proposal.

ETHICS APPROVALS

In order to conduct the interviews and community photography discussed above, ethics approval applications were submitted to Flinders University¹⁶ and Simon Fraser University (with all final approvals resolved in the first half of 2011).

COMMUNITY-BASED RESEARCH

Prior to receiving the ethics approvals noted above, however, the collaborative approach as started in stage one of the Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project was continued in the development phase of Stage 2. Indeed, numerous discussions and consultations took place (2010–2011) to ensure that MACAI members were comfortable with extending the broader goals of the stage one interpretive project to undertake the IPinCH-funded project and to ensure that all community aspirations were appropriately addressed. Isobelle Campbell, chairperson of MACAI, provided signed approvals for the project upon being satisfied that the other MACAI members were in agreement. The long-term relationships established between Amy Roberts and MACAI members through the Stage 1 process (and prior to this time between Amy Roberts and the late Richard Hunter) ensured open communications in this regard.

The collaborative endeavour has obviously continued throughout both stages of the project in relation to the content of the booklets. For example, in addition to the artwork and information produced in stage one, new Aboriginal community perspectives were incorporated as a result of the semi-structured interviews and the visit to the South Australian Museum (see section below). Indeed, important statements from community members were included that highlighted connections to Ngaut Ngaut and its significance to individuals in the present. This is exemplified and neatly captured by Isobelle Campbell's statement at the beginning of this report, which is also the opening page of the Ngaut Ngaut interpretive booklet.

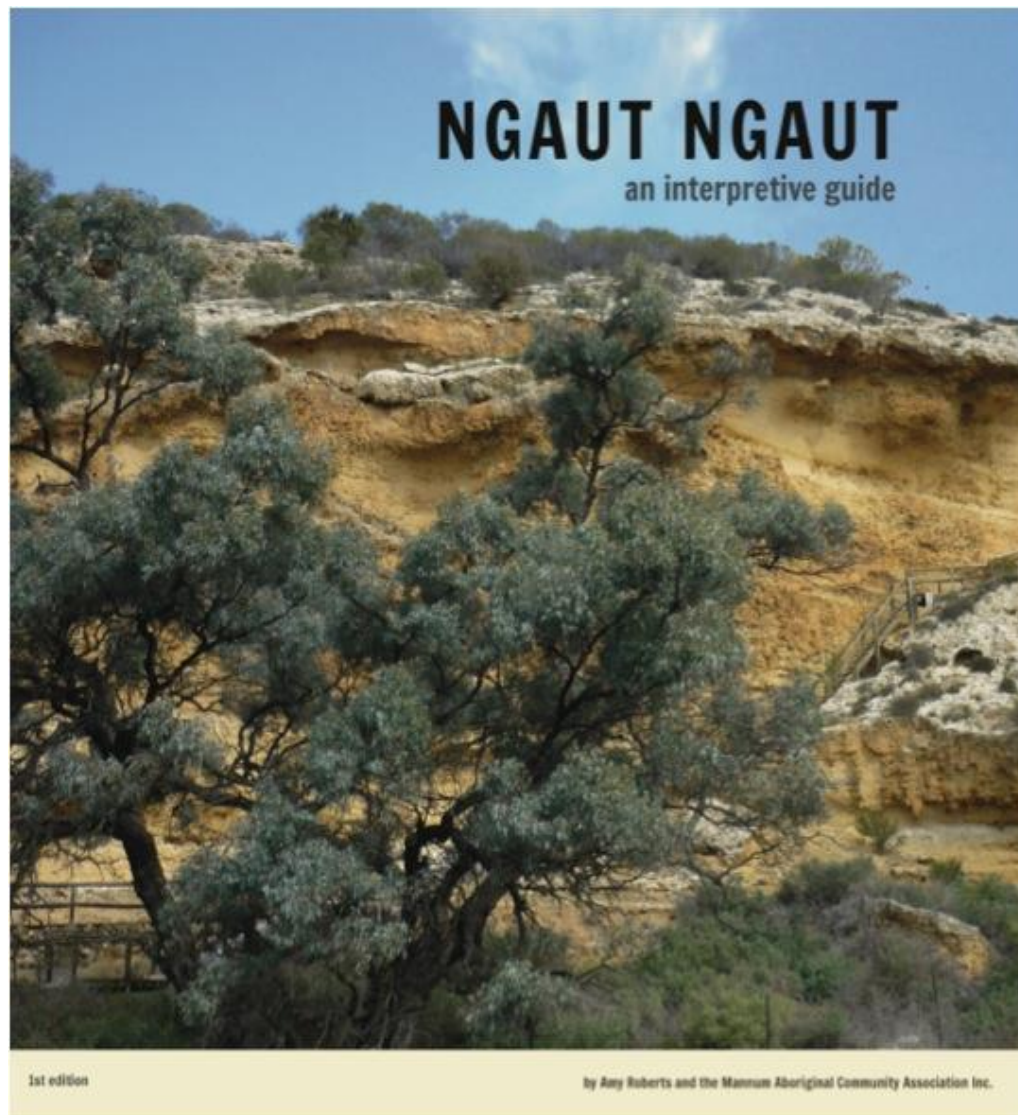
Other aims arose as a result of the continued collaboration. For example, MACAI members decided that they wanted other aspirations addressed in addition to the interpretive materials/themes noted above. Indeed, given that one of MACAI's broader aims is to undertake specific cross-cultural understanding through the education of children, it was agreed that a specific section of the booklet would be targeted toward children.

Given the community impetus for the project and resulting partnerships involved in the production of the interpretive materials, we argue that this project represents one of a number of emerging models for the development of sustainable and community-based interpretive projects (see Mortensen and Nicholas 2010).

¹⁶ Flinders University Social and Behavioural Research Ethics Committee project approval number 4768.

OUTCOMES

The project has delivered on all of the case study objectives (see p. 22). The interpretive booklet was published in 2012, and MACAI has already sold numerous copies of the hard copy version. The online version is also now freely available.¹⁷ In addition to these primary achievements, other outcomes relating to the initial goals of the project are explored below, as well as some of the projects and other activities that have followed from the Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project and the IPinCH-funded case study.



The cover of the Ngaut Ngaut interpretive booklet.

¹⁷

http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/Find_a_Park/Browse_by_region/Murray_River/Ngaut_Ngaut_Conservation_Park.

South Australian Museum Visits

“Seeing the Ngaut Ngaut collection at the South Australian Museum made us emotional. In the future we plan to build a keeping place and interpretive centre at Ngaut Ngaut to look after the artefacts – they are ours to take forward now – they have more meaning when they are on country.”

Isobelle Campbell, Ivy Campbell, and Anita Hunter

Three visits in total were undertaken to explore the South Australian Museum Archaeological Collections and Archives in Adelaide as a component of this project, with aspects of the visits incorporated into the interpretive booklet. These visits were an important part of our case study journey. Indeed, as Byrne (2008: 155) has noted, we should not underestimate the recollections and emotions that are triggered by the sights, smell, and feel of objects and places. As the above quotation from community members intimates, numerous emotions were experienced — frustration that the collection was held in an institutional context; suspicion about the extent of the collections; relief that the majority of the collection was in good condition; and joy via the exploration of the artefacts.



Isobelle Campbell, Anita Hunter and Ivy Campbell inspecting artefacts excavated by Norman Tindale and Herbert Hale — now housed at the South Australian Museum (2011).
Photograph by Amy Roberts.

As with another IPinCH-funded case study —“A Case of Access: Inuvialuit Engagement with the Smithsonian Institution’s MacFarlane Collection,”¹⁸ the South Australian Museum visits created a “research paradigm” that promoted Indigenous “perspectives into the mainstream of the production of knowledge” about the past (see Loring et al.: n.d.). Indeed, images and quotes in this section of the report are featured in the interpretive booklet, now freely available to members of the public.



**Isobelle Campbell inspecting artefacts from the Ngaut Ngaut assemblage (2011).
Photograph by Amy Roberts.**

Distantly stored museum collections pose a number of problems for Indigenous communities. A primary problem is the issue of control over the assemblages; for example, managing or regulating researcher access to the collections. Other issues include ensuring that community members can continue their connection to the artefacts. Projects such as this case study provide an important (and funded) way to enable communities to remind institutions that they assert proprietary rights over such assemblages, as well as facilitating longer-term community connections and education.

¹⁸ The Inuvialuit project’s Final Report is available at:
http://www.sfu.ca/ipinch/sites/default/files/resources/reports/inuvialuit_project_summary_2014.pdf



One of the storage boxes that holds materials from the Ngaut Ngaut assemblage (2011).
Photograph by Amy Roberts.

Capacity Building Initiatives

Another aspect of our case study was using IPinCH funding to promote capacity-building opportunities for MACAI representatives. In this regard it was decided that enabling MACAI members to attend international and national conferences/symposia to talk about the Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project and to learn from their international and national Indigenous counterparts, as well as from other archaeological projects and practitioners, would be beneficial.



Isobelle Campbell and Amy Roberts presenting a paper at the 2011 IPinCH conference in Vancouver. Photograph courtesy of IPinCH.

Funds were provided to MACAI to enable Isobelle Campbell to attend the 2011 and 2014 IPinCH workshops in Vancouver. In addition, funds were obtained to support MACAI members Ivy Campbell, Sam Stewart and Isobelle Campbell to attend the Australian Archaeological Association conference in 2013 where they took the opportunity to promote the booklets produced through the IPinCH-funded case study. Attending these conferences also allowed the MACAI members to gain insights into various aspects of the archaeological discipline. For example, at the Australian Archaeological Association conference, on the one hand they were fascinated to learn of the many and various projects occurring nationally and internationally and, on the other, they were surprised to see so few Indigenous peoples presenting about their own cultural heritage. They were also frustrated by the lack of acknowledgement paid by researchers to respecting the traditional owners of the cultural heritage about which they spoke.

Furthermore, IPinCH funding allowed Amy Roberts and Isobelle Campbell to jointly present their paper about Ngaut Ngaut rock art (one of the follow-on research projects from the IPinCH case study). Isobelle's achievements in 2013 were particularly noted as an outstanding example of Indigenous involvement in the archaeological discipline, and her success was recorded in the Australian Archaeological Association blog.¹⁹ Such achievements reveal the importance of collaborative research and related benefits to community members in relation to capacity building.



**MACAI members Ivy Campbell and Sam Stewart promoting the booklets produced as part of the IPinCH case study at the Australian Archaeological Association conference in 2013.
Photograph by Amy Roberts.**

IPinCH-funding was also approved to purchase reference materials (primarily archaeological textbooks) for the community for their future use. Since their provision, these books have been circulating amongst community members. Whilst a seemingly small element of the IPinCH case study outcomes, it is a sad fact that many Indigenous communities do not have copies and/or access to the materials written about them and their heritage. It was for the latter reason also that a visit to the South Australian Museum Archives was arranged. The archives contain an enormous amount of written and sound recordings about Aboriginal people. The Norman Tindale collection and the related Board for Anthropological Research Expedition materials comprise a significant portion of the materials available about Aboriginal people from the Mid-Murray region.

¹⁹ See <http://australianarchaeology.com/2013/12/indigenous-participation-in-aaa-2013/>.

CONCLUSIONS

The involvement and support of IPinCH in the broader Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project has been a truly beneficial relationship. The funding has allowed us to produce collaboratively produced online materials to counter the offensive and/or otherwise unfocused materials otherwise available. The funding also allowed numerous other capacity-building activities, such as the attendance and participation in national and international conferences, purchase of reference materials for the community, and a range of other benefits.

Furthermore, IPinCH funding has provided MACAI members access to distantly stored museum and archival collections, which is an important avenue for them to remind institutions that they assert proprietary rights over such assemblages, as well as facilitating ongoing community connection and education.

We consider collaborative and community-based research as the only way to proceed into the future, and the validity provided by IPinCH has supported these approaches. The guiding members of IPinCH have been a continual source of inspiration and encouragement. We have enormously enjoyed our IPinCH journey despite the work involved in achieving our goals. Our collaborative relationship has certainly been strengthened and become more robust as a result of the project and we look forward to our ongoing friendships into the future.

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2012 *Ngaut Ngaut: An Interpretive Guide*. Adelaide: IPinCH and MACAI.

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2010 The Ngaut Ngaut (Devon Downs) Interpretive Project: Presenting Archaeological History to the Public. Australian Archaeological Association Conference, Batemans Bay, 9-13 December 2010.

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Appendix A:

Case Study Publications and Related Other Outputs

Below we list publications and other outputs (e.g., conference presentations) that are directly related to our IPinCH case study as well as other publications/outputs that have arisen out of or followed on from the research outlined in this report. In particular we would note that almost all of the publications/outputs have been co-authored and/or co-presented – an achievement of which we are particularly proud and which arose out of an agreement early on during which we resolved that if our work was to be truly collaborative that community members and researchers should share equally in the project experiences and any resulting recognition.

Refereed Articles

Nicholas, George, Amy L. Roberts, Joe Watkins, Lyn Leader-Elliott, Dave Schaepe, and Susan Rowley

2011 A Consideration of Theory, Principles and Practice in Collaborative Archaeology. *Cambridge Archaeological Review* 26(2): 11-30.

Roberts, A. L., I. Campbell, A. Pring, G. Bell, A. Watchman, R.S. Popelka-Filcoff, C. C. Lenehan, C. T. Gibson, N. Franklin, and the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc. (MACAI)

in press A Multi-disciplinary Investigation of the Rock Coating at Ngaut Ngaut (Devon Downs), South Australia. *Australian Archaeology*.

Roberts, Amy L., and the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc.

2012 *Ngaut Ngaut: An Interpretive Guide*. Adelaide: IPinCH and MACAI. [hard copy and available online at http://www.environment.sa.gov.au/parks/Find_a_Park/Browse_by_region/Murray_River/Ngaut_Ngaut_Conservation_Park]

Roberts, Amy L., Natalie Franklin, Isobelle Campbell, and the Mannum Aboriginal Community Association.

2014 Ngaut Ngaut (Devon Downs) Petroglyphs Reconsidered. *Rock Art Research* 31(1).

2014 A Few Notes on Historical Vandalism and ‘Graffiti’ at Ngaut Ngaut (Devon Downs), South Australia. *Rock Art Research* 31(2).

Other Journal Articles

Roberts, Amy L., and Isobelle Campbell

2012 The Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project: Collaboration and Mutually Beneficial Outcomes. *The SAA Archaeological Record* 12(4): 29-31. Available online at: <http://onlinedigeditions.com/publication/?i=127481>

Book Chapters

Campbell, Isobelle, and Amy L. Roberts

submitted. A Cultural Tourism Story from Ngaut Ngaut, South Australia: The Internet, Tourists, Photography and Racism. In IPinCH (eds), *A Cultural Tourism Reader*. IPinCH. In preparation.

Conference Presentations

Roberts, Amy L., and Isobelle Campbell

2011 The Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project: Providing Culturally Sustainable Online Content to the Public. Intellectual Property Issues in Cultural Heritage Conference, Vancouver, 29 September – 3 October 2011.

Roberts, Amy L., Isobelle Campbell, and Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc.

2012 Culturally Sustainable Online Content: Insights from the Ngaut Ngaut (Devon Downs) Interpretive Project, South Australia. Australian Archaeological Association Conference, Wollongong, 9-13 December 2012.

Roberts, Amy L., and Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc.

2011 Community Initiatives and Archaeology: The Ngaut Ngaut Interpretive Project. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Montreal, 16-20 November 2011.

Roberts, Amy L., Natalie Franklin, Isobelle Campbell, and Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc.

2013 The Ngaut Ngaut (Devon Downs) Engravings: A Reconsideration of Sequences and Syntheses. Australian Archaeological Association, Coffs Harbour, 1-4 December 2013.

Roberts, Amy L., Mannum Aboriginal Community Association Inc., and Alex van Wessem,

2010 The Ngaut Ngaut (Devon Downs) Interpretive Project – Presenting Archaeological History to the Public. Australian Archaeological Association Conference, Batemans Bay, 9-13 December 2010. URL:

http://www.australianarchaeologicalassociation.com.au/poster_gallery